

THEREFORE WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A flexible pouch, comprising:

a) opposed sheets of flexible polymeric film material sealed together around a peripheral edge of each enclosing a storage chamber there between for a foodstuff to be stored therein, the flexible polymeric film material having a pre-selected film suppleness; and

b) at least one pressure relief valve formed directly in the flexible polymeric film material, the at least pressure relief valve including at least one valve entrance, and at least one channel passageway terminating in a valve outlet which define a passageway from the storage chamber to the exterior of the pouch, the at least one channel passageway having an effective tortuosity which, in combination with the pre-selected film suppleness, results in opening of the at least one pressure relief valve when a threshold pressure is surpassed in the storage chamber to permit an excess of gas generated by the food stuff to be vented through the pressure relief valve and when the pressure drops below the threshold pressure the channel passageway closes at one or more points along its length thus substantially inhibiting back-flow of air back into the storage chamber.

2. The flexible pouch according to claim 1 wherein the effective tortuosity and the pre-selected film suppleness are chosen to maintain an internal pressure in the chamber below an amount that can bloat the pouch to the

extent that the seals can rupture and permit oxygen penetration or spilling of the contents outside the pouch.

3. The flexible pouch according to claim 1 wherein said at least one valve entrance is one valve entrance and wherein said at least one channel passageway is one channel passageway having at least one 90 degree, or greater, turn between the one valve entrance and the valve outlet.

4. The flexible pouch according to claim 3 wherein the at least one channel passageway is one channel passageway, and wherein the at least one valve entrance is one valve entrance which narrows down to the one channel passageway.

5. The flexible pouch according to claim 1 wherein the at least one valve entrance is two valve entrances spaced apart from each other, and wherein the at least one channel passageways is two channel passageways each being in flow communication with one of the two valve entrances, the two channel passageways merging into a common outlet passageway which terminates at the valve outlet and each of the two channel passageways having at least one 90 degree, or greater, turn between its associated valve entrance and the common outlet passageway.

6. The flexible pouch according to claim 1 wherein the at least one valve entrance is two valve entrances spaced apart from each other, and wherein the at least one channel passageways is two channel passageways each being in flow communication with one of the two valve entrances, the two channel passageways merging into a common outlet passageway which terminates at the valve outlet and each of the two channel passageways having a plurality of 90 degree, or greater, turns between its associated valve entrance and the common outlet passageway.

7. The flexible pouch according to claim 1 wherein the pouch encloses fresh roasted ground or whole bean coffee.

8. A flexible pouch for containing food products, comprising:

a) flexible sheets sealed together around a peripheral edge of the flexible sheets and defining therebetween a storage compartment for containing therein a food product; and

b) a pressure relief valve integrally formed in a peripheral edge portion of the flexible sheets, the pressure relief valve having an effective torturous channel and geometry so that it remains closed when an internal pressure inside the storage compartment is below a pre-selected pressure but opens when the pre-selected pressure is exceeded and when the pressure drops below the threshold pressure the channel passageway closes at one or more

points along its length thus substantially inhibiting back-flow of air back into the storage chamber.

9. The flexible pouch according to claim 8 wherein the pressure relief valve is a one-way valve including at least one valve entrance, and at least one channel passageway terminating in a valve outlet which defines a passageway from the storage compartment to the exterior of the pouch.

10. The flexible pouch according to claim 9 wherein the flexible sheets include flexible polymeric film material.

11. The flexible pouch according to claim 10 wherein the at least one valve entrance is two valve entrances spaced apart from each other, and wherein the at least one channel passageways is two channel passageways each being in flow communication with one of the two valve entrances, the two channel passageways merging into a common outlet passageway which terminates at the valve outlet and each of the two channel passageways having a plurality of 90 degree, or greater, turns between its associated valve entrance and the common outlet passageway.

12. The flexible pouch according to claim 9 wherein the pouch encloses fresh roasted ground or whole bean coffee.